

Editorial Board, Cleveland.com and the Plain Dealer in a June 3 editorial expose a dirty trick effort by some State of Ohio political folks to seize low-performing public schools without due process or compensation to citizens who paid for them.

The attached June 3 Editorial provides details of the nefarious plan of some state officials to essentially take control of low-performing school districts and even transfer control to a private entity.

Since the Reagan administration, the public common school system has been under attack by some federal and state politicians. During the intervening four-plus decades, the public common school system has withstood the attacks and maintained the support of the communities in which they are a part of.

This atrocious proposal ranks high in dirty tricks to destroy the public common school system.

Bid to privatize low-performing Ohio schools outrageously hidden in waiver request: editorial

- Published: Jun. 03, 2026, 5:55 a.m.

By

- [Editorial Board, cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer](#)

The state of Ohio wants to be excused from certain federal requirements under the nation's main K-12 law and has drafted a federal waiver request to do so.

Fine. The state has a right to ask for waivers it characterizes as intended to provide more flexibility and to save money; up to the federal government to grant or deny.

But Ohio does not have the right to use that waiver request to hide an odiferous bid to seize low-performing public schools without due process or compensation to the citizens who paid for them and force them to close or transfer assets to private entities.

Yet that is just what the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has been trying to sneak through as part of its waiver request -- a fact that [came to light only after "public educators warned about those proposals](#) in statements to the media," cleveland.com's Laura Hancock reported last week.

That's not just stinky. It's downright wrong and almost certainly illegal.

What's more, how can any Ohioan trust their state government when something so consequential is hidden away in bureaucratese in a proposal whose backers failed to flag the provisions in public discussions and disclosures? And secreted them in a draft waiver on the verge of being submitted to the federal government?

The waiver language goes even further, with a whole raft of ways it would authorize the state to close, seize or privatize low-performing public schools -- a process often masked in the waiver language by seemingly innocuous references to "school management organizations," code for the private entities running charter schools.

Leaving aside whether it's even constitutional to seize public schools in this way, trying to use a federal waiver to empower the state to make such hugely consequential changes in its handling of low-performing schools is way beyond wrong.

These proposals need to be considered in written legislation that can be reviewed and debated fully in hearings.

Oh, but that's right. They were.

[Ohio Senate Bill 127](#) to change “closure requirements for poor-performing public schools” was introduced more than a year ago by state Sen. Andrew O. Brenner of Delaware County. (Brenner lost his bid for another term in the May 5 Republican primary.)

SB 127 is still pending in the Senate Education Committee, but Hancock reports that some of its key provisions on closing low-performing schools -- many of which have now magically resurfaced in the federal waiver proposal -- were so distasteful and lacking in transparency and accountability, according to public education officials, that they were removed wholesale from the legislation in May.

Now, it seems, they're b-a-a-a-ck.

Ohio's effort to use the nontransparent and unaccountable means of a federal waiver to empower the state to deploy provisions legislators had already rejected to close and privatize low-performing public schools is beyond unacceptable.

They cannot and should not stand.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce should remove these provisions from its waiver request forthwith and let the Ohio legislature do its job by addressing -- through full hearings and debate -- any changes to state law regarding low-performing schools.

The citizens of Ohio deserve no less.

About our editorials: Editorials express the view of the [editorial board](#) of [cleveland.com](#) and [The Plain Dealer](#) -- the senior leadership and editorial-writing staff. As is traditional, editorials are unsigned and intended to be seen as the voice of the news organization.

[Editorial Board cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer](#)